

Last fall the U.S. Bureau of the Census released results from the American Community Survey (ACS) for counties with populations of over 65,000 inhabitants. This is just the second annual release of demographic, economic, social, and housing data from this relatively new survey that replaces the “long form” questions from the once-each-decade Census. Responses to the ACS are obtained from about 14,900 households and 800 persons living in group quarters (i.e. college dormitories, nursing homes, jails) throughout the state of Utah.

As part of the ACS, labor force information is collected which includes several “journey-to-work” questions. These questions tell us how people get to work, how long their commute to work takes, and whether their job is located outside their county of residence. This information provides insights into the mobility of the labor force, particularly for the Wasatch Front—urban core—counties of Salt Lake, Utah, Davis and Weber.

In 2006, most Utahns (75.2 percent of workers) went to work alone in

cars and trucks, as did commuters in the nation as a whole (76 percent). Of the urban core counties, Davis had the highest percent of workers driving alone (79.8 percent) and Utah County had the lowest (71.6 percent). In the U.S. 10.7 percent of workers use a car pool to get to work, while 13.1 percent do in Utah and 12.7 percent car pool to work among the urban core counties. Public transit accounts for a relatively small proportion of commutes to work (see graph).

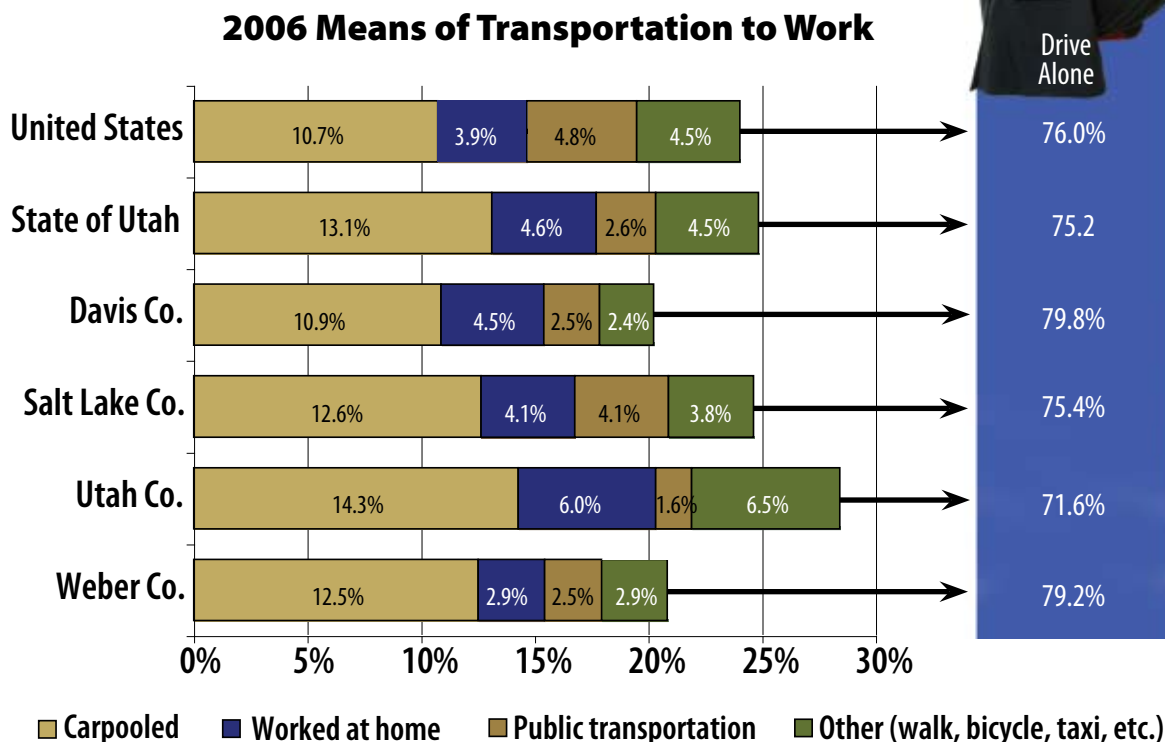
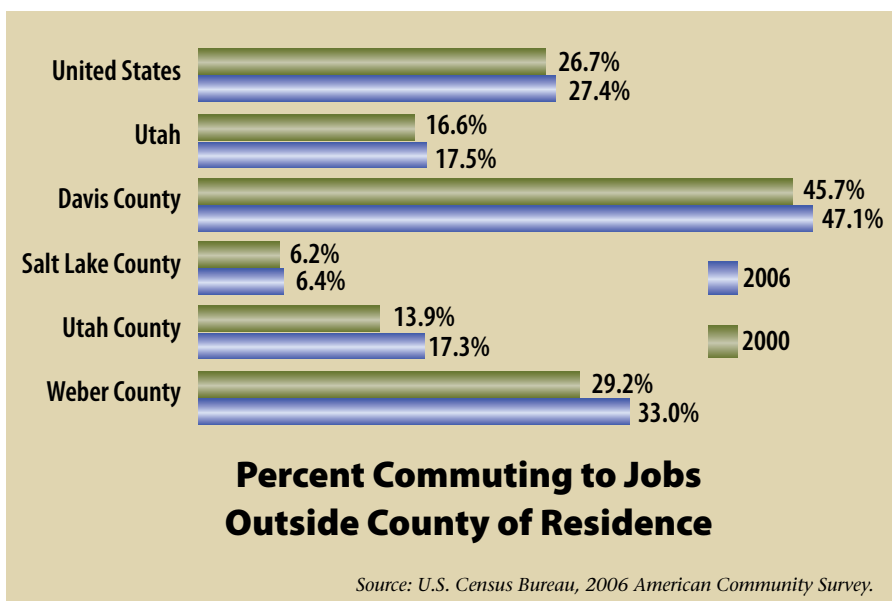


Journey to Work

***Commuter facts
for the Wasatch
Front***

Workers indicated that, in Utah and in the U.S., travel times to work have not increased in 2006 compared to those reported in the 2000 Census. This is, by in large, accurate for the urban core counties with Salt Lake experiencing a reduction from 22.5 minutes in 2000 to 21.3 minutes for the average commute, and Utah County's average commute increasing from 18.8 minutes in 2000 to 20.4 minutes in 2006.

One trend that the ACS data confirms is the continuing increase in the percentage of workers who commute to jobs outside their county of residence to work. This is true for Utah and particularly true for the urban core counties (see graph). On average, 17.5 percent of Utahns leave their resident county to work. Among Utah's counties, there is considerable variation in the percent of workers who commute outside their county of residence to work. Of course most commutes are to employment centers, with Salt Lake City as Utah's capital city and economic hub, seeing a major influx of workers from all surrounding counties. ⓘ



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006 American Community Survey.